

## Section

## 4

## Action Plan

The East Mountain Area is faced with several challenges relative to development and future growth. The following information summarizes the foundation for the Area Plan:

- The area has scenic qualities and an existing rural character that are unique to Bernalillo County, beautiful, and vulnerable;
- Responsible development must be properly planned for and regulated to prevent it from destroying the area's rural character and environment
- Observance of basic conservation principals can prevent environmental degradation, including minimizing impacts related to water quantity and water quality issues.

The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1988, identified the entire East Mountain Area as within the Rural district. County A-2 zoning is presently applied to most undeveloped lands in the area. The Comprehensive Plan states that decisions authorizing development in the Rural Area should be made in conjunction with environmental analyses, which highlight site suitability and potential impacts. Furthermore, Rural Areas of great environmental or scenic value should be considered for major Public Open Space designation, acquisition, and preservation. Environmentally appropriate development in Rural Areas should be encouraged to stabilize and maintain the open, rural character. A site's environmental conditions should guide new development's location, intensity, and character in the entire East Mountain Area. The Comprehensive Plan states that if densities in remote and environmentally sensitive portions of the area were limited to one dwelling unit for every 5 to 20 acres (depending on local environmental conditions), then some problems associated with development at A-1 and A-2 intensities could be minimized.

The Area Plan for the East Mountain Area of Bernalillo County must recognize the goals and objectives of residents, the unique character of the area, and its sensitive environmental conditions. Together, these factors provide direction and guidance for the

drafting of land use and development policies specifically tailored for this area. The East Mountain Area's vision, conditions, and goals have been updated to produce the current East Mountain Area Plan.

### *Policies*

It is important to Rural Area preservation that the distinct character and value of specific regions within the East Mountain Area be recognized and maintained. The unique rural attributes and environmental conditions warrant development standards that differ from those applied in urban Areas. The policies below provide direction for future development and land use decisions in the East Mountain Area.

Implementing the policies will only be possible if the necessary funds and personnel are available to the affected County Departments. General implementation provisions include the following:

- Adopt the East Mountain Area Plan (2005) update
- Guide all development with the intent to maintain the rural character of the East Mountain Area.
- Review and make necessary amendments to the Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance for compatibility with the recommendations in the EMAP.
- Establish additional plans to implement goals of the EMAP.

Periodic review and evaluation is critical to the successful implementation of the East Mountain Area Plan. Bernalillo County Zoning, Building, Planning, and Environmental Health Department shall review the East Mountain Area Plan every five years and solicit citizen input in the review. This review shall focus upon action items and recommendations that were accomplished, utility of the plan to the County Planning Commission and staff, and demographic changes in the area. This will allow the County to evaluate the plan's effectiveness and identify areas in need of modifications and/or revisions. The efforts in this plan should be coordinated with those in other Bernalillo County plans that affect the East Mountain Area.

## Land Use

Wide open spaces, scenic views, farms, and houses spaced far from one another are what largely characterize a rural area and represents a lifestyle different from that in an urban setting. The rural character of the East Mountain Area is very important to its residents and gives the East Mountain Area its own unique identity and “sense of place”. The citizens in the East Mountain Area acknowledge and are concerned that the existence of the area’s rural character is vulnerable to change. Planning for land uses provides the means for involvement in addressing these concerns. The progress and goals achieved in other plans, such as the East Mountain Trails and Bikeways Master Plan contribute to the effort of maintaining the character of the area.

### GENERAL LAND USE – 1

#### GOALS

- Promote development that retains the unique rural character of the East Mountain Area.
- Protect the property rights of property owners while ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all inhabitants.
- Prevent future degradation of the natural environment as a result of new subdivisions.
- Preserve agricultural uses that are compatible with the environmental conditions of the area.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Emphasize development that consists primarily of ranches, farms, and large-lot (minimum net lot size of two acres) single-family residential lots.
- Provide public trail corridors and trailheads wherever possible.
- Use natural resource capacities (water availability and quality, waste water disposal, and soil capacity), and community/regional goals as guidelines for development.
- Maintain (to the extent feasible) agricultural uses for lands suitable or historically used for agriculture. Discourage non-agricultural development for such lands, although parks, ranches, and trails may be appropriate uses.
- Historical and cultural character shall be used to guide development of inhabited rural settlements.
- Designate specific areas for permanent mobile home development.

## POLICIES

- 1.1 Bernalillo County shall evaluate future development and land uses in accordance with the specific environmental factors affecting each site. These factors include:
  - water availability and quality
  - waste water disposal and treatment
  - steep slope areas/erosion control
  - floodplain/arroyo corridors
  - visual characteristics
  - vegetation
  - soil types
  - fire breaks in forested areas.
- 1.2 All existing and future developments in the East Mountain Area (new subdivisions and existing lots of record) have the potential to degrade the existing character and environmental conditions and shall ensure that future degradation is minimized.
- 1.3 Average residential density for any new subdivision within the East Mountain Area shall not be approved at less than 2-acre net lot size per single-family dwelling unit.
- 1.4 Subdivisions with trail development potential, as outlined in the East Mountain Trail and Bikeways Master Plan, shall work with Bernalillo County Planning Department and Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation toward identifying and providing trail corridors in the County Development Review Authority process.
- 1.5 Subdivision and development on existing lots in areas of poor soils, steep slopes, wildlife habitat areas, and high scenic quality areas shall consider planning relative to water supply, waste water treatment, building site, road layouts, drainage, and subdivision design.
- 1.6 New rural development shall be sensitive to existing historic, cultural, architectural, and economic patterns.
- 1.7 Agricultural uses within the East Mountain Area shall be preserved through continued and enhanced tax incentives.
- 1.8 New, small-scale agricultural activities such as light crop production, home gardening, sustainable agriculture, and animal husbandry shall be encouraged where consistent with environmental conditions.

- 1.9 New agricultural uses requiring extensive irrigation water (1,000 gpm or more) shall be limited to areas with sufficient available water, proven water rights and approval from the Office of the State Engineer.

## BERNALILLO COUNTY PUBLIC OPEN SPACE – 2

### GOALS

- Work with private and non-profit entities to establish and maintain a network of educational and recreational facilities, parks, trails and open spaces that promote recreation, tourism, cultural activities, trail corridors, protection from natural and manmade hazards, and conservation of natural and visual resources.
- Secure long term funding (20+ years) source for Bernalillo County Open Space (BCOS)
- Develop resource management plans for BCOS properties that conserve and enhance natural and cultural resources while providing opportunities for public education and recreation.
- Preserve and enhance water resources on BCOS properties.
- Form partnerships with agencies and community organizations to build BCOS capacity for land management by BCOS and other land conservation partners.

### OBJECTIVES

- Establish guidelines for the identification, acquisition, maintenance and preservation of these areas.
- Create an Open Space Network which connects a system of residential areas, developed neighborhood parks, and community natural open areas, to other parks and major public open space areas, to meet a range of needs at different scales and to serve the population of the development and adjacent areas.
- Create a multi-purpose network of open spaces and trail corridors along arroyos (above the 100 year flood plain and flood safety zone) and maintain the natural state of such arroyos wherever possible.
- Balance natural and cultural resource protection with public use.
- Involve the community and other agencies in property inventory and planning process.
- Explore habitat enhancement through constructed wetlands or moist soils areas.
- Continue to improve irrigation efficiency on agricultural lands.
- Balance preservation of water quality and quantity with public use.
- Plan for extended droughts by exploring alternative farming techniques such as native grass and grazing management programs.

- Engage the public and community organizations in stewardship and education programs that promote responsible use and community ownership of Open Space lands.
- Continue to partner with Natural Resource and Conservation Service, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and acequia associations on agricultural lands.

POLICIES	
2.1	Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department shall pursue the acquisition and/or preservation of the Major Open Space Areas identified by the Open Space Advisory Committee.
2.2	Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department shall work with the National Forest Service and City of Albuquerque Open Space Division concerning joint efforts for the provision of trails, trailheads and parking lots, group gathering sites, outdoor classrooms, handicapped access to open space, and acquisition of more open space.
2.3	Bernalillo County shall require all major subdivisions to designate a minimum usable space of 20% of the subdivision as public open space and/or trails
2.4	Bernalillo County shall require major subdivisions abutting public Open Space to provide access to the public.
2.5	Bernalillo County shall encourage citizen stewardship of specific open space sites and shall work with the East Mountain Coalition of Neighborhood Associations to implement the Trails and Bikeways Master Plan.

## POSSIBLE TECHNIQUES

### Establishment of sector plans

Bernalillo County shall prioritize and prepare specific plans for neighborhoods or sub-areas within the East Mountain Area. These plans will specify development criteria for the areas they cover and can establish specialized zoning. Each sector plan must be presented to the Bernalillo County Commission for approval and adoption.

First, a format for sector plans shall be established so that future plans will be consistent with this EMAP and the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan. This template will include natural resources analysis, economic data, community